1. The Gospel

Learning Objectives

- To understand the main key elements of the Gospel
- To be able to articulate the Gospel to others

Welcome [5 mins]

- We are starting our TAG Catalysts course today.
- TAG stands for Transforming a Generation, which are Christian resources from an organization called South West Youth Ministries.
- A catalyst is someone or something that causes a big change. We believe that growing deeper and closer to God will cause a big change in you, and we hope that you will be people that cause big changes and influence everything, and everyone, around you!

🏸 **Bonus Game:**
Select a game that will best suit your group and setting. Consider games that fit with the theme of memory or good news.

Pray for the session

Introduction [5 mins]

📽️ **Video:** Watch this video together "**Disneyland Surprise!**"

LINK - https://youtu.be/nXxY9v2p3xg

Question: What is the best news you have ever heard?

> *Go around the group asking them to share a time they heard some good news. Don't rush this section as it helps young people get drawn into the theme of Good News. This could be as big as finding out you have passed a major exam, or it could be as simple as there is a new series of your favourite TV show.*

Hearing good news is exciting – it makes us feel good! Who doesn't want to hear good news? As Christians, we have the ultimate best news to share! We call this the Gospel, which means Good News.

In this session, we are going to be looking at "The Gospel" and discovering what is so good about this Good News.

Bible Focus [25 mins]

The Gospel is at the heart of Christianity but we can often struggle to articulate it, especially when we are under pressure.

> 📖 **Read**: 1 Peter 3:15 " *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*"

Have someone read this passage and explain that the bible teaches us that we should always be prepared so we can tell others where we get our hope from.

By the end of this session, we will all be able to articulate the Gospel using a helpful way of remembering it!

Explaining the four points:

Explain each of the four points as outlined below.

For each point, draw the symbol on a flipchart and stick on the sentence that goes alongside each of the four points (see appendix). Spend up to 4 minutes on each point.

Drawing the symbol encourages young people either to draw it physically or mentally when they explain it to others, which will help prompt their memory of the four points.

The Gospel is beautiful, complex and deep. But there is a good way of summarizing the Gospel in four easy points.

First point: Love

God loves us and created us to know him personally.

- God made everything. He made the planet, the animals, and he created humans. It was everything that God intended it to be. This place was perfect. So perfect and beautiful in fact that it was described as a garden. A garden called Eden. Everything was in its right place; everything was alive and flourishing.
- Humankind were in a perfect relationship with each other, with God and with Creation.
- And better than all of this, God walked in this garden, with his creation and his people.
- Love isn't something that God just does, it's what He is. It says in 1 John 4v16 that "God is love." Love is the essence of God.

Second point: Separation

We are separated from God by our sin so we cannot know him or experience his love.

- God said his world was good and gave some basic guidelines to Adam and Eve:
  - Be fruitful and multiply
  - Work and take care of his creation
  - Honour him by not eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- But Adam and Eve did eat the fruit from the tree. They believed the lie that they could be lord of their own lives and would be better off outside of God's commands. And from that point on the perfect story changed instantly.
- The Bible calls this, and everything else that turns us away from God, sin.

📖 Romans 3v23 says "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

- As a result of disobeying God, Adam and Eve felt ashamed, and they realized that they had done wrong. God told them that because of their actions they would have to work tirelessly, experience pain and competition from one another. This meant that Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden, and they were separated from God.
- So, at that moment the relationships; with God, with each other, with ourselves and with our planet were broken.
- For generations, people have tried to restore those relationships, but we just couldn't do it ourselves. We have kept on sinning.

Third point: Jesus

Jesus Christ is God's only solution for our sin. Through him alone we can know God and experience his love and forgiveness.

📖 Rom 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus."

- There is always a price to be paid for breaking the law. E.g. If you were caught breaking the speed limit. It doesn't matter what other good things you have done; a good judge will punish you.
- For us to be set free someone needed to pay the price for our sin. The problem is, it is a debt none of us can afford. There was only one person who could…
- 2,000 years ago, God intervened and sent his son Jesus to live a perfect life as if that fruit had never been touched and as if those four relationships had never been broken.
- Jesus led a truly holy and blameless life. Jesus was the only one that could pay for our sins and there was only one way to pay, death on the cross.
- Jesus died on the cross so all our sins would be paid.
- Jesus gave dignity, love and worth to everyone who was broken. Jesus gave compassion and provided for the needs of the people he met. He showed how they no longer needed to be separated from one another. Jesus lived in complete harmony with his creation and his planet. Jesus restored all four relationships.
- His radical new way of living ultimately led to his death.
- Jesus defeated death by rising from the dead 3 days later! Therefore, death has no hold on Jesus or us! And because of what Jesus did, we have been made pure and nothing can take that away from us! We have been made new!

📖 It says in John 3:16-17 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

Fourth point: Choice

We must each respond by asking Jesus to be the King of our lives. Then we can know God personally and experience his love and forgiveness.

- And now we all have to make a choice. We have a choice to accept what Jesus has done for us or dismiss it. We have a choice to ask God for forgiveness for our sins, follow Jesus, live for Him and live for more. Or we can simply brush it off and not let it transform us.

📖 John 10:10 says "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*"

- But God will never force us to do something against our wills, either now or for eternity.

📖 Romans 10:9-10 says "*...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

Although we can't earn it, we have to intentionally accept God's love for us. We need to accept that we have sinned, that Jesus died on the cross for us and rose again and we must make a choice to live life his way.

📖 Matthew 16:24-25 "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Question: What is most exciting to you or what stands out to you about the Gospel?

Draw out a discussion from this question and ask subsequent questions. Try and get them to be specific about what stands out to them.

For some of you, this might be the first time you have heard or understood the Gospel. You also may be feeling something on your heart as if you have been stirred by the Gospel story. If that's you, this is God's way of wanting to get your attention. Jesus wants you to know him and to make that choice to follow Him and give your life to God as we talked about in the fourth point.

Now would be a great time to ask if anyone in the group has been challenged by the Gospel. You may want to ask if there is there anyone who wants to know God's love, his forgiveness and what it's like to be in relationship with Him?

Ask: Does anyone want to make a choice to live for God right now?

If so, please spend time praying for them and helping them make that commitment.

🙏 **Activity: Pray**

Take a moment to pray to God, thanking him for the Gospel and encourage the young people to tell God what they are thankful for.

Bonus: – Errors in sharing the Gospel [15 Minutes]

Sometimes the Gospel isn't told fully when it is explained to people and one of the four points gets missed out completely and this can be a problem.

- **First point: Love**

Sometimes it is said that 'You are a sinner but Jesus died for you to forgive your sins, so will you trust and follow him.'

ASK: What part have they missed out? Why is that part important?
They have forgotten that the whole Bible starts with God loving us and the whole point is that God loves us and he wants us to know him.

- **Second point: Sin**

Sometimes it is said that 'God loves you and he loves you so much that Jesus died for you, so will you trust and follow him.'

ASK: What part have they missed out? Why is that part important?
They have forgotten the massive sin problem that human beings have and how much we need rescuing.

- **Third point: Jesus**

Sometimes it is said that 'God loves you and you have sinned but don't worry. Just say yes to God and you will be saved.'
ASK: What part have they missed out? Why is that part important?
They have forgotten about Jesus and what he did on the cross to make it possible for us to be saved into God's family.

- **Fourth point: Choice**

Sometimes it is said 'God loves you and he created you to know him. But the problem is you have sinned and you have been separated from him. But don't worry because Jesus died for you to save you from your sin.'

ASK: What part have they missed out? Why is that part important?
This implies it is automatic and everyone is already fine. But they have missed the choice we all have to make to respond to Jesus. We have to put our faith in him.
Having these four points in our head keeps it simple and makes sure we don't miss anything out. These pictures can also help us to know how to respond to people's questions. What someone asks about the Gospel can help us to know which part of the four points need explaining to them in greater detail.

For example;

- If you were talking to someone and they said something like 'I believe in God, so I just try and be a good person."

ASK: Which one of the four points do they need to know more about?
.....It is the second point about how none of us are perfect and all of us have sinned, which has led us to be cut off from God.

- If you were talking to someone and they said something like 'There are so many religions. How can Christianity be the only right one?'

ASK: Which one of the four points do they need to know more about?
.....It is the third point about how Jesus said he is the only way. He was either right or wrong. Claiming to be "the only way to God" was one of the reasons people were so mad at him.

- If you were talking to someone and they said something like 'I don't think God cares about me.'

ASK: Which one of the four points do they need to know more about? It is the first point and how God loves us, and he created us to know him.

Testimony [3 mins]

Have a leader share a time when someone shared the Gospel with them, and how it made a lasting impact.

Application: [15 mins]

Just like the stories we shared right at the beginning of the session, when we have good news we have to share it! It's too exciting to keep to ourselves!

Sometimes the idea of sharing or telling people about the Gospel can make us nervous because we are worried that we might mess it up or don't know how they will react. But guys, give yourself a break! All of us get nervous and none of us communicate perfectly all the time.

In John 4, it tells the story of a woman at a well who has an incredible encounter with Jesus for the very first time. Straight away, she runs off to the town telling everyone about Jesus and she didn't know much, she only just met Jesus!

📣 **Activity: Sharing the Gospel**

With the whole group, quickly summarise and remind everyone of the four points and symbols.

Split the group into pairs and have them select one person as person A and the other as person B.

Within each pair, have person A tell person B the Gospel in three minutes.

Once they've shared, have person A go find another pair so new pairs are formed. This time, ask person B to share the Gospel in three minutes to person A.

💭 **Bonus Content:** Spend more time practising sharing the Gospel with each other.

Ask: How did you find that?

With the whole group, ask them how they found it. Ask if they surprised themselves by how well they could remember and articulate the Gospel. Ask if they feel more confident in knowing what the Gospel is and being able to tell someone else.

Conclusion & Challenge [2 mins]

We hope this session has helped you understand what the Gospel is and that you are excited by this Good News! We also hope that you have grown in confidence in telling others what the Gospel is.

Challenge:

This week's challenge is to practice sharing the Gospel with someone this week. It doesn't matter if they are a Christian, it's all about getting confident in sharing the Gospel. However, you get bonus points if they are not!

> ***Pray to end the session***